

SPIRIT
of the
STORM
AND OTHER POEMS



By
DAVID IRVING DOBSON



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SPIRIT
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STORM
AND OTHER POEMS

By
DAVID IRVING DOBSON



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
MY WORDS	9-10
THE SPIRIT OF THE STORM.....	11-12
A TOILER'S PLAINT.....	13-14
TO ONE IN BONDAGE.....	15
ONE NIGHT IN AUTUMN.....	16
THE SUICIDES	17
MY SONG	18
TO THE MUSE.....	19
TO MAXIM GORKY.....	20
RECREATION	21
WITHERING ROSES	21
THE MASQUERADER	22
TO A YOUTHFUL TOILER.....	23
TO THE MORNING STAR.....	24
"CIVILIZATION"	25
SONG OF THE WAGE SLAVE.....	26
A WISH	26
SPRING MUSINGS	27
LAST NIGHT	28
DEAD LOVES	28
ON THE RIVER	29
OCTOBER	30
THY SONG	31
ASPIRATION	32
THE CALL	33
O MOTHER	34-35
THE HEART'S SONG	36
TO THE WIND	37
LADY IN WHITE	38
A SONG OF TODAY	39
THE SEAMSTRESS	40
EXIT ROMANTICISM	41
LIBERTY'S PLIGHT	42
THE UNEMPLOYED	43

CONTENTS—Continued

	PAGE
IN MEMORIAM	44
A SONG	45
AT EVENTIDE	46
RESURRECTION	46
A TOILER'S SPRINGTIME	47
THE GARDEN	47
VANQUISHED	48
PERHAPS	49
WHEN I AM GONE	50
TO THE BROOK.....	51
AUTUMN ON THE ROAD	52
THE ROCK AND THE STORM	53
AFTERWARDS	54
THE PIANIST	55
THE PEDDLER	56
AVERBUCH	57-58
HITCH YOUR WAGON	59
LAMENTATION	60
SPRING CAME	61
AN AUTUMN DAY	61
A PASTORAL	62
"SOCIETY LADIES TO FIGHT RADICALISM"	63
THE RUSSIAN SHADOW	64
FLATBUSH	65
WHERE TO?	66
DANIEL DE LEON	67
THEY WHO WEEP	68
KINDRED SPIRITS	68
NATURE	69
VIGIL	69
OCTOBER IDYLL	70-71
WE HAVE NOT FAILED	72
SOUL OF A SHOPKEEPER	73
"OPEN FOR DAILY MEDITATION"	74
THE IRISH MARTYRS	75-76
SILENCE	77
IN MEMORY OF HORACE TRAUBEL	78
MODERN LOVE	79
SUNSET	80

CONTENTS—Continued

	PAGE
THE MARCH WIND	81
SPRING SONG	82
JOHN REED	83
IN WARTIME	84
FIRST LOVE	85
NIGHT IN CHICAGO	86
AWAITING A CHILD	87
THE MEADOWLARK AND THE POET	88-89
BOY AND MAN	90
AUTUMN	91
TREAD OF THE FROST	92
LYRIC	93
“A WIND-TOSSED ROSE-LEAF”— <i>Hafiz</i>	94
MY ESTATE	95
TO DEATH	96

FOREWORD

By FLOYD DELL

I write these few words, not by way of undertaking to assess the value of my friend's poems for readers who, after all, must decide that question for themselves, but rather in order to express my views upon the subject: "Why Read Poetry?" It seems to me that all of us who read poetry do so for the same reason that some of us write it: because we can not endure being imprisoned within the confining walls of Here and Now. Poetry is not the only liberator from such imprisonment; but its wings are strong; and for those of us who do not get too dizzy it can take us far above the earth and show us, in the perspective which of old the gods were thought to enjoy, the human miseries by which we are afflicted.

Poets are traditionally supposed (by "red-blooded" people) to be continually bemoaning their unhappy fate. The truth is that red-blooded people indulge in their feverish and largely meaningless activities, in order not to have any time to contemplate their own unhappy fate—the realization of which would be unendurable. The poet is braver; he can face the truth about his fate. And he has that courage precisely because he can see himself, from high above and from far off, as one of many. So that when he speaks for himself he is—in the degree of his perception—speaking for others. It is for this reason that when we can not write poetry we read it. We find ourselves, in our most secret moods, mirrored in another's poems.

The poet reveals our hiddenmost hopes and fears to us. And conversely, those who read poetry are those who are debarred only by some technical limitation from writing it. They are potential poets. Hence the poet has always in a sense, fellow-poets for an audience. And he pleases them to the degree in which he utters for them *their* unwritten poems.

The Here and Now in which mankind is imprisoned has never, it would seem, been more irksome to the impatient soul than since the introduction of machinery. It seems that we can bear almost anything better than our nineteenth and twentieth century servitude to the machine.

Poets, no matter how gloomy a view of human fate they took, used to find many things to be incidentally enthusiastic about—such as flowers, and stars, and beautiful women. But the flowers are being pushed further and further out of sight by the huge extensions of city brick and mortar; the stars are more and more hidden from our gaze by factory smoke; and beautiful women no longer seen as the consolations of a dreary life, but rather as fellow-victims, are quite as likely to evoke pity as admiration. Thus poetry becomes less and less calculated to give immediate cheer; even in its more ostensibly gay moods, it has an undertone of mocking irony. But it has a deeper comfort, which all those who have suffered, and are not afraid to remember it, must ever be grateful for.

But the machine age has done more than make us rebelliously unhappy; it has shown us the promise of escape. And that promise gives more and more, to the poetry of today, a tone of hope, of faith, of ultimate certitude. Man will always desire more beauty and happiness than any world can offer; but he need not be restricted to such poor desires as vainly afflict him now. The time will come when our poetry, with its rages of rebellion against the conventions of property and sex, will seem queer and rather meaningless: but in that free world of the future, poets will rage still, against the bondage of the Here and Now—and those who can not write poems for themselves will borrow gladly these same airy wings of escape.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

MY WORDS

My words are the echoes of struggle,
The sound of the sweatshop and mart;—
Written in tears of a wage slave
And wrung from the depths of his heart.

I wrote when my voice was too tender
To cry against all earthly wrong;
And I wept as I wrote in my anguish,
The lines of my sorrowful song.

My text is not taken from ball room
Or palace of those who are gay;
I'd rather these lines were a heart-throb
To echo the life of today . . .

To echo the lives of the toilers
Who carry the burdens of earth;—
While those whom they love are ill nourished
And curse the sad day of their birth.

I've toiled since the days of my childhood
In shops and in factory hells;

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

And the sorry result of my labor
My careworn countenance tells.

I have lived in the midst of the lowly,
Where sunshine is awfully rare;
Where babes in their cradles must perish
Because of the pestilent air.

I have lived and hoped and struggled
For freedom that seemed so remote;—
And when I was wearied and downcast
I stayed in my hallroom and wrote.

I wrote of the life all about me,
The life that I knew ah, too well;—
A life that was full of endurance
Or all of the tortures of hell.

* * *

Hence I ask no forgiveness for writing
In words that are gruesome and gray;
And I hope that my words may help hasten
The brighter and happier day . . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE SPIRIT OF THE STORM

The night had cast its shadows far and wide,
And myriad crystals shone in grand array;
And slowly wending its ethereal way,
The moon, like sweet young blushing bride,
Did bathe the world in subtle blue and gray.

The woodland lay enraptured in sweet sleep,
A sacred temple of sweet Nature's art;
The singing brook had ope'd to me its heart,
While somewhere in a tree a bird did weep,
And to the night did saddest tale impart.

I wandered close beside the singing brook,
And listened to its quaint and plaintive lay;
A mortal soul who, weary of the day,
Sought peace within this sweet and lonesome nook,
To banish all discordant thoughts away.

In silent thoughts and meditation lost,
I pondered o'er the problems of the world;
Life's blood-stained banners were to me un-
furled,

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

And in my heart I wept upon the cost:
The countless lives into oblivion hurled.

A voice within me seemed to question "Why?"
"Why all this struggle and this endless race;
And why, the everlasting tear-soiled face,
The hollow cheek and weeping sunken eye,
The falsehood's honor and the truth's disgrace?"

And from the depths emerged a mystic form,
Its eyes were large and deep; its hair long
white;
It was a spirit groping in the night;
Which bore forebodings of a coming storm,
That must arrive and set the world aright.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

A TOILER'S PLAINT

You may sing of sunshine and flowers,
Of the beauty and joy of spring;
But for me the day's long hours
Naught but weariness bring.

I weep when the sun is shining,
For I know not how this may be,
That I, a man, am slaving,
While beasts in the woods are free.

The birds that live in the forests
Are happily soaring about;
They sing to the glory of nature
As they fill their loved one's mouth.

The bees that hum in the meadow
Give praise to the glorious sun;
They embrace and kiss the flowers
'Till the livelong day is done.

While I, who am made in "God's image,"
Am sweating my life away;

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

And I long for the night's fair bosom,
While I hate and I curse the day.

I curse the day with its noises,
Its hurry, and worry, and wrath;
For the best of my life has it taken
And leaves me a prey unto Death.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

TO ONE IN BONDAGE

Young, charming, soul-stirring birdling,
Beating thy frail, bleeding wing 'gainst the
bars;

Vainly attempting to cast off thy fetters,
And soar on thy spirit-wings up to the stars!

Lured by the hope of appeasing thy hunger,
Didst barter thy soul for a handful of grain;
Never suspecting the cage and its trapdoor,
Never a thought of its bringing thee pain.

Ah, how I pity thee, child of my sorrow,
Sister in bondage, I, too, feel thy pain;
Would we had strength enough to break the
shackles,
So that sweet freedom might crown us again.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

ONE NIGHT IN AUTUMN

Sadly the night-wind moans in the tree-tops,
Weeping and howling in heart rending tone;
While out of the heavens, teardrops are falling,
Teardrops, nay, raindrops that pierce to the
bone.

A weary and ragged old woman sits huddled
On one of the benches that stand in the park,
Like some wild beast that forever is hounded,
She seeks to conceal herself here in the dark.

And several ladies in autos are passing,
They laugh and they chatter as they pass her
by:
But none of them ever seem to take notice
Of her, who will soon in obscurity die.

* * * *

While sadly the night-wind moans in the treetops,
Weeping and howling in heart rending tone;
And out of the heavens, teardrops are falling,
Teardrops, nay, raindrops that pierce to the
bone.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE SUICIDES

Out of the river of endless pain,
Out of the channels of human wrath;
Poverty, promenading with Death,
Sings her mournful, doleful refrain.

“Come with me, oh weary, sad souls,
Come away, from life’s seething mass;
I will teach ye, how Death to caress,
In death are your only goals.”

And numberless multitudes stagger along,
Follow her beckoning unto that sphere;
Casting aside from them all doubt and fear,
They follow the strains of her song

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

MY SONG

'Tis the song of the common life I am singing,
Oh, hear it my patient friend;
'Tis a message of hope and love I am bringing,
Which the suffering must understand.

The end of the sorrowful days are coming,
The slaves of Mammon are up;
And loving flowers of freedom are blooming
In place of that bitter cup—

Of the bitter cup which made life dreary,
For ages and ages past;
And the unjust toil that makes men weary,
Must disappear at last.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

TO THE MUSE

Fair Muse, I pray thee leave me now,
And do not thrill my care-worn soul;
For daily strife has numbed my brow,
And filled my heart with wheels that roll—
In factory-dungeon gray.

To-day, I cannot think nor feel,
Nor dream of days when I'll rejoice;
For ah, I am like a factory wheel,
And every sound's a foreman's voice;
So leave me, Muse, I pray.

Some day when I am by myself,
Away from noise and pain and greed;
Beyond the grasp of power and pelf
And engine-wheels that fly and speed,
Then you may come and stay

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

TO MAXIM GORKY

Sound as the oak that grows from rugged soil,
Blest with a mind that fathoms life's queer
moods;

The counsellor thou art for those who toil,
The prophet thou of struggling multitudes.

Vainly the masters cast their curse on thee,
Longing to still thy brave heart's fiery throb;
Thou the forerunner of sweet liberty,
Defender of the ones who sigh and sob.

Sing on! My angel poet. Thy good song
Thrills every heart that feels its melodies;
Sing on! And in the hopeful days along,
Humanity shall live thy harmonies.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

RECREATION

Tonight, my soul, we two shall wander free,
Removed from earth's discordant, bitter woe;
And far from sorrow's highway let us go
And drink the muse's nectar lavishly.
'Tis but a moment that we steal from life
When you and I appoint an hour to meet;
And, ah! this stolen moment is most sweet;
It bids me live away from endless strife
And bids me rise above all grave defeat.

WITHERING ROSES

This morning while hurrying onward,
To reach my grim factory hell,
I saw in the dust of the pavement
A rose that was sweet ere it fell.

It lay there unnoticed, forsaken,
Its petals were crushed and forlorn;
And gone was its once youthful ardor,
And gone was the tint it had worn.

And I thought of the numberless roses
That wither away in the dust—
The children that slave in the workshops
And sell their young lives for a crust.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE MASQUERADER

At times I feel as though an inward voice
From out my secret heart doth whisper low;
It queries "Mortal man why sigh'st thou so?
Canst thou not live and in thy life rejoice?"

"See, oh wand'rer, how fair the sun doth rise,
And in its sacred glare life finds its own;
Whilst thou forsaken one dost ever moan
And thy sad heart's lament doth shame the skies."

The voice then dies; and I go forth anew
To face the heartless world and wear a smile;
It must not know I'm weeping all the while;
The world hates the one who dares be true.

* * *

And thus with smiling face and weeping heart
I tarry here and play my woeful part.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

TO A YOUTHFUL TOILER

Child with eyes divinely blue
Like the summer skies above;
In thy sweet lips' crimson hue
Lurketh woe instead of love.

I am overcome with pain
When I see thee here today,
Toiling for a master's gain,
When you ought to be at play.

'Tis a brutal, heartless age,
Which deprives thee of thy youth,
And enslaves thee for a wage,
Far too small for thee in sooth.

Ah, that I were brave and strong
And could wrest thee from the tomb,
Where the days are endless long,
And thy life doth be in gloom.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

TO THE MORNING STAR

I do not greet thee, harbinger of day,
Because thy glare remindeth me of toil;
Of long and weary hours of dismay
Where every thought is lost in strife and moil.

To bird and beast thy light means life and mirth,
The coming of a bright and sunny morn;
While unto me, a "crown-prince of the earth,"
It means another day in fact'ry hell forlorn.

Thy splendor can not charm a weary slave,
Who sells unto a master all his powers;
Nor can it please a miner in his grave,
Who wastes beneath the earth his life's best
hours.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

“CIVILIZATION”

We live in an era of science and strife,
Of commerce and dollars galore;
And still we must lead such a wearisome life,
As never was heard of before.

Today, hearts have turned into glittering coin,
And minds have become cash accounts;
And there where a soul's sacred fire would burn,
Today, only business abounds.

Where beauty once dwelt on a towering plane.
And freedom unfolded her wing;
Today, awful greed and corruption and pain,
Linger there, and to Mammon they sing.

Man has learnt how to conquer the forest and
stream,
And mountains must weep at his will;
Yet happiness ever remains but a dream,
In spite of man's God-like skill.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

SONG OF THE WAGE SLAVE

I fain would sing of love and art, my dear,
Had not mine eyes beheld life's bitter truth;
Had I not been a slave since early youth
And spent my childhood in the workshop drear.
Since I am doomed to lead this barren life,
Creating wealth to quench the master's greed,
I can but sigh for other hearts that bleed
And like my own are doomed to endless strife.

A WISH

Ah, to be free as a bird in its flight,
Midst flowers and meadows and woods;
Away from this terrible grasp of the night,
Where never a ray of the sun comes in sight,
And man drowns in miserable moods.
Away from the city's pestilent air,
The people so sickly and pale;
Away from the haunts of pain and despair,
Where brotherly feeling is awfully rare,
And truth gets the Cross and the Nail.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

SPRING MUSINGS

And what though it bloom in field and in wood,
And what though the air hold a fragrance of
Spring,
And what though the earth smile in gladness and
joy,
And what though the robin again taketh wing?
To me all the seasons seem closely allied,
Winter and summer, springtime and fall;
I slave in a dungeon by Mammon's domain
And no one doth fathom the depth of my pain:
Oh, Life! I am sick of it all.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

LAST NIGHT

Last night the moon a crystal crescent shone,
And myriad gems the heavens blue adorned;
And like an outcast by the world scorned
I strolled beside the lake all by my own.

Before me, trembling in the moonlight's glow,
A silver sheet lay stretched into the night;
And in my heart I felt a keen delight
To be alone, for crowds fatigue me so.

DEAD LOVES

Still sweetly lingers on the summer air,
The fragrance of a rose my love had known;
Still in the twilight and the skies' red glare,
Dead loves their lurid destinies bemoan.

All that love had, it gave ungrudgingly,
'Till every vestige of its youth was spent;
And now it seeks solace in dimmed memory
And begs of time his blessed sacrament.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

ON THE RIVER

Here, ah here my heart is free,
Here my soul doth rise and smile;
Here in pure sweet ecstasy
Happiness is mine a while.
Far is every earthly care,
Long forgotten strife and pain;
Echoes seem to fill the air,
Saying, "Life is not in vain."
Here I am the real self,
Brave and strong and Godlike "I";
Brother to the woodland elf,
Bird and beast and butterfly.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

OCTOBER

Clouds hang low
Over the fields
Kissed by cold
Autumnal winds;
Gold-laden boughs
Swing to and fro,
Lashed by the rod
Boreas wields.

One lonely rose
Adorns the waste,
Mingling its red
With brown and gold;
And far and near
The weary year
Laments because
'Tis growing old.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THY SONG

Thy song of long ago
Has never left my heart;
I hid it there, and so
It dominates my art,
And prompts me in the part
Which I am here to play;
And often when the day
Seems lost in somber gray
And I am worn with cares,
I turn to those sweet hours
With thee midst pretty bowers,
And I hum thy summer airs.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

ASPIRATION

This is not mere desire,
This is the soul's sweet fire;
Which bids me love the higher,
 And brings the fruit of dreams.

As all my days seem dreary,
And evenings find me weary;
'Tis hope that keeps me cheery,
 Though vain my hoping seems.

And there are times and hours,
When all my pent-up powers
Like early April flowers,
 Burst forth in joyous bloom.

Then like a giant waking,
I feel my chains are breaking;
And though my heart is aching,
 I fear no earthly doom.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE CALL

All summer long we toiled away,
From early morn till dusk;
We filled the masters' bins with grain,
And we were fed on husk.

We built the masters' mansions grand
And kept their gardens green;
And we were cooped in tenements
And crippled by machine.

The summer days have come and gone
And now shall come the fall;
Each day will find us burdened down
With labors great and small.

Our lords will revel in their wealth,
And wine and dine in style;
And we, who toil and dig and delve,
Will perish all the while.

For them, the joys of life and ease,
For us, the pangs and pains;
Oh, brothers, fellow workers, rise!
And let us break the chains.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

O MOTHER

(Translated from the Yiddish of Mani Leib.)

The horse and sleigh beside the gate
Stand buried half in snow;
Within the cottage mother weeps
And wrings her hands in woe.
“Farewell, dear Mother! Dry your tears
And give me your soft hand;
And wish thy child both fame and wealth
Within the golden land. . . .”

The ship drifts o’er the surging sea
Mantled by misty shroud;
Now lost in a bottomless ocean abyss,
Now sailing into a cloud.
Above I see my mother weep,
And reaching her delicate hand;
“O child, what happiness is yours
There in the golden land?”

In dust, and smoke, and grime obscured,
The shop, a dungeon stands;

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

And there, from early morn till dusk,
I toil with brain and hands.

And toiling I see my mother in tears
Pointing with delicate hand—
“How can you, dear child, be happy
Here in the golden land?”

The tenement house is silent now,
’Tis midnight, and I cannot rest;
O mother, come and rock me to sleep
As of old—with my head on your breast.
And resting, I see my mother in tears,
Smoothing my brow with her hand;
“My darling child there is no joy
Here in the golden land! . . .”

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE HEART'S SONG

What matters it whether I sing and weep,
The world lauds the ones who are the strong;
It matters not whether my grief is deep,
This is no age for song.

Yet doth the heart pour out its monotones,
As doth the wind in cloudy Autumn nights;
And in its melancholy, tears and moans,
It endlessly delights.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

TO THE WIND

Hast thou no soul, oh wind in treetops weeping,
Hast thou no heart which bleedeth as doth mine;
Oh, can it be that thou, thy vigils keeping,
Dost not for human derelicts repine?

Dost thou not weep at sight of haggard faces,
Of struggling souls that wither in the dust;
Can it be true that in thy gentle graces
There is no thought of human greed and lust?

Methinks I hear within thy midnight moaning,
The cry of pain within the human clan;
And then I see the sinful world atoning
And urging on the brotherhood of man.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

LADY IN WHITE

(A PORTRAIT)

Out of a gilded frame her red lips smile,
Radiantly she poses with a lily in her hand;
Her alabaster throat and eyes beguile
As fair a soul as e'er emerged from fairyland.

In years to come these brush strokes will survive;
And many a day, long after she has gone
To unknown shores, as all fair creatures must;
Her smile, her look will still remain alive,
Forever challenging grim Death and dust.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

A SONG OF TODAY

This is the song of the stifled soul,
And the tears that flow unseen;
This is the lay of the unreached goal
And the life that is dark and mean.

Out of the depths of the city's mire
It echoes its woeful sob;
And with its slow consuming fire,
The mind of its peace doth rob.

Here youth in its early bloom doth fade,
Chained to commercial greed;
And Art in a tomb of want is laid,
And none the heart's voice heed!

Here age in the almshouse counts its days,
'And weeps its wasted years;
Here Death his time-worn sickle sways
And ends one's hopes and fears.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE SEAMSTRESS

She dreams in vain of life's most precious flowers,
Hers is the fate to struggle on unseen;
Hers but to waste the day's serenest hours
In toil and sweat beside the dark machine.

Time looks and laughs at her relentless struggle,
The heap of garments lying on the floor,
The bitter game she plays with want and hunger,
Where Death at last must write the final score.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

EXIT ROMANTICISM

Gone are the ages heroic,
No giants to saber and lance,
This is the time of the stoic,
Gone are the days of romance.

Knighthood has fled before labor,
Overalls clothe a young prince;
Lochinvar clerks for his neighbor,
Trying his worth to evince.

Juliet slaves in a laundry,
Romeo pushes a cart;
Valentine toils in a foundry,
A plumber won Cynthia's heart.

Elizabeth punches a keyboard,
Dolores writes credit and cash;
Catherine's throne is a switchboard,
And Beatrice, poor girl, "slings hash."

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

LIBERTY'S PLIGHT

O the earth is red with the blood of men
And the skies are dark and grim;
And Liberty's poor prostrate form,
Lies limp on the chasm's brim.

No more her fair face crowns the earth
Her voice is dead and dumb;—
Save that faint echoes from her past,
Upon the breezes come.

Who shall revive her beauteous face,
Give life unto her breath,
There's still a chance for her to live,
Tho' e'er so close to death.

Is there no man so brave and true,
Who might arise and stand,
And reach to poor faint Liberty,
A strong uplifting hand?

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE UNEMPLOYED

We waited long, we waited long,
A haggard, hungry mob;
Within a stuffy corridor
And each prayed for a job.
While silently I vainly prayed
My heart would cease its throb.

At last the well-fed "super" came
And eyed us with contempt;
That sallow-faced, grim multitude,
Ill clad; with hair unkempt,
And in my heart I vainly prayed
"Would God, I were exempt."

We all our "pedigrees" wrote down,
As part of the "red tape;"
The masters we had served before,
And whence our last escape;
While silently I doubted some
Man's prestige o'er the ape.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

IN MEMORIAM

(J. Howard Moore, Self-Slain, June 19th, 1916.)

Born into a world of chaotic strife,
Thy soul did languish in earth's prison house;
Thou wert a lover of all human life,
And human pain thy protest did arouse.

The world was mad in its eternal haste,
Whilst thou stoodst by and sighed a pitying
breath;
Lamenting always on life's ruin and waste,
And weeping ever over living death.

Would I might own the power to express,
The deep regard my spirit bore for thine;—
I would with all my own soul's tenderness,
Thy deathless soul enshrine.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

A SONG

Brother, has life been too hard an endurance,
Has sin and temptation enshrouded your mind;
Take hope in this humble and heartfelt assurance,
That God will not punish, for He is too kind.

Your life is your own to mar or to sweeten,
But ere you can do so remember the fact,
That most of religions are old and worm-eaten,
And should not determine your thought or your
act.

And God does not live in the temples and
churches,
Nor does He sanction the demagogue's art;
But out of the love in our lives He emerges
And all that He asks for is cleanness of heart.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

AT EVENTIDE

The day is drawing to the western hills
And purple cloudlets throng the summer sky;
A meadowlark's sweet warble from on high
My careworn soul with inspiration fills.

This is my hour of rest, my one sweet hour,
Removed from all the worries of the day;
Now all discordant thought is cast away,
And nature heals the heart with silent power.

RESURRECTION

When the wind is in the treetops,
Singing gladly of the spring,
And the birds are chirping gayly,
And the trees are blossoming,
Then my heart leaps up in joyance,
Shedding pain and earthly woe,
And my soul is resurrected,
From the winter's cold and snow.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

A TOILER'S SPRINGTIME

Spring and sun and bird-song,
Through my window smile;
And a bit of heaven,
Blue and white above.
But I must keep on toiling,
Struggling all the while;
Just a humble day drudge,
Without hope or love.

THE GARDEN

How fair and green the garden lies,
How tranquilly it sleeps,
For vagrant bees and butterflies
A paradise it keeps.

And in the night unto the moon
Its heart and soul lie bare;
While Pan's enchanting melodies
Pervade its sacred air.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

VANQUISHED

Like to the rose that fades,
Like to the dying day;
One by one the years and all their dreams,
Are fleeting far away.

Naught save the deed undone,
The hopeless wish unfilled;—
Life like a vain resolve,
Is slowly stilled.

Once like a ruling prince, in fair domain,
The Superman defied all earthly things;
And now in earthly agony and pain,
He crawls on broken wings.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

PERHAPS

I may be born again
In some far after life
To see my dream take form;
The bitter thought no more
Will pierce my aching brain.

I shall not be the hater
Nor the ardent lover,
But like the ripple
Of the woodland brook,
Dashing alike over rocks
And thorns and meadowlands.
The real "me," defiant and serene,
Shall mock oblivion.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

WHEN I AM GONE

Say this of me when I am gone,
Into the land of peace and rest;
Just this, "He too loved Beauty once,
And was by her enchantment blest."

And do not weep upon my tomb,
Nor cry against the hand of Fate;
Just say, "He lived the rose's bloom,
And even thorns he could not hate."

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

TO THE BROOK

Murmur, murmur, little brook,
On your busy way,
Through the forest's solitude
All the live-long day.

Far away from wretchedness,
Misery and strife;
Flowing, babbling, happily
Dancing on through life.

Dancing on so merrily
Near a peasant's cot;
Giving music to my soul,
Oh, thy happy lot!

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

AUTUMN ON THE ROAD

The summer's beauty is no more,
Its warm blue sky has vanished;
And in the trees the wind doth roar,
And flowers sweet are banished.

Now autumn spreads its golden hue,
In solemn way enshrining;
The forest's green, the distant blue,
And all the ivy's twining.

The lonely road lies sorrowing
For Summer's happy presence;
It yearns for children's frolicking,
To break its awful silence.

It longs to hear their voices sweet,
On summer's echo ringing;
And loves to feel their tiny feet,
As they walk on while singing.

But now the Summer is no more,
Its warm blue sky has vanished;
And in the trees the wind doth roar,
And flowers sweet are banished.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE ROCK AND THE STORM

(A LEGEND)

In a desert far away,
There stood a rock so old and gray;
It knew not love, nor knew it hate,
Nor cared it much for time or fate.

But once, a storm had come along,
And to this rock poured out its song;
So sweet and sad this song had proved.
That even the stone to tears was moved.

* * * *

Gentle reader, have no fears,
Stones are seldom moved to tears.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

AFTERWARDS

When this thing is over and the world is sane
again,

We shall reflect with horror on all the needless
pain.

We shall abhor the pages, chronicles of blood
Spilt in the name of kaisers, countries, flags and
God.

And man shall live in freedom and love old Mother
Earth,

And no one shall bemoan the accident of birth.

The world shall be one nation on a cooperative
plan;

Guided by one edict—the Brotherhood of Man.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE PLANIST

To day, I felt that I had lived,
My mind was at its ease;
I heard the sweetest melody
Borne on the summer's breeze.

My heart was full of joyousness,
O'erfilled with music sweet;
I felt such sacred harmony,
Which I can scarce repeat.

A child, and yet so talented,
Such power in her touch;
She thrilled me to such ecstasy
I felt, I lived so much.

I lived, unconscious of myself,
Unsoiled, by worldly slime;
I wandered far from earthliness.
Into a realm sublime.

Mysterious, was all I heard,
So endless, pure and calm;
It left a loving memory,
That e'er my life will charm.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE PEDDLER

He stood all day with a basket,
On a corner of the street;
A haggard, hungry creature,
The portrait of defeat.

The housewives hurried by him,
They would not buy his stock;
All day he waited vainly,
And now 'twas eight o'clock.

So he staggered homeward sadly,
To rest his weary head;
All night he moaned and muttered—
At dawn they found him dead.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

AVERBUCH

(A BALLAD)

He sought a land where he might be,
Without the despot's rule;
And found that man was only free,
In books he read at school.

He meant no harm, nor fatal day,
To those who rule the land;
But sought to teach a better way;
To make men understand.

And so one day it come to pass
That he was filled with drub;
Because a teacher of the mass,
Was silenced by the "club."

He went to see the legal chief,
And ask him to explain;
O foolish youth! 'Twas his belief
It would not be in vain.

But tyrants fear a fatal end,
And cowards woe surmise;
So Shippy clutched with forceful fend,
And took him by surprise.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

He held him as he would a beast,
That sought to do some harm;
And all the time his fear increased
And made his wrath more warm.

Then drawing out a bloody gun,
He pierced the youthful heart;
For shooting unto him is fun,
Who knows the killing art.

And when he saw the youthful form,
Lie prostrate at his feet;
He aimed once more the gun still warm,
And did his act repeat.

And thus a soul went on its way,
The victim of a fyke;
For souls must seek their judgment day,
And brutish men must strike.

But as we have no right to judge,
Or wield the chastening rod;
So let us entertain no grudge,
But leave the job to God.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

HITCH YOUR WAGON

Hitch your wagon to a star,
Strive to be a master mind;
They who wish to travel far,
Must not dare to lag behind.

Life is merely one great way,
Between darkness and void;
Therefore let thy soul have sway,
And the heart's voice shall be heard.

Few there be who know the law,
That one can make one's life or mar;
Who would from Fortune favor draw,
Must hitch his wagon to a star.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

LAMENTATION

The wind is wailing at my garden gate;
And all the tears that human eyes have known,
And all the souls that in their silence moan,
And all the sad grim derelicts of fate,
And all whose broken hearts are turned to
stone,
Gather around me, and forever wait. . .

What can I give them? Poor hungry hearts!
How can I feed their unfulfilled desires?
When in my soul a thousand smould'ring fires
Are nigh extinct amidst life's noisy marts?

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

SPRING CAME

Spring came, a youthful nymph, and dancing o'er
lawn,

A fairy queen in all her grand array;
She clothed the woodland in a robe of dawn
And drove grim Winter's snow and pain away.

* * * *

The earth awoke, and in a song of praise,
The wind poured out his heart on flowery dell,
Proclaiming loudly through the length'ning days
That nature sits enthroned, and all is well.

AN AUTUMN DAY

Sweetheart, the summer is over,
Pale glimmers the harvest moon;
The bees have forsaken the clover,
The birds will fly southward soon.
Winter will come; and the nightwind
May utter his mournful refrain;
Yet do not despair, for I know dear,
Love must forever remain.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

A PASTORAL

Soon the rose will bloom,
Sing, my heart,
Oh, sing, my heart;
June days banish gloom,
Sing, my heart,
Oh! sing my heart!

Skies will smile above me,
And on those who love me,
Sing, my heart,
For life and art
Are born again today.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

“SOCIETY LADIES TO FIGHT RADICALISM”

—*News Item.*

Give them the rouge and lipstick,
Polish their pretty nails;
Sprinkle their gowns in perfume,
Nothing else avails.

Watch them go forth to battle
Radical thought and deed;
Workers are naught but cattle,
Why should they wish to be freed?

Give them the rouge and lipstick,
Polish their pretty nails;
Sprinkle their souls in perfume,
Nothing else avails. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE RUSSIAN SHADOW

Over the wide steppes
The wind howls in the snow;
And Death hovers over the huts,
And only carrion crows
Are always cawing, cawing:

Tillers and toilers dying,
Slowly starving and dying;
There in the Volga valley,
Where Russia weeps in blood
And life is down for naught.

A Christian world marvels
At the havoc it has wrought;—
With blockade, war and falsehood
It has slain defenseless babes
And starved their nursing mothers.

Oh, bitter grim repentance
Forever must pursue
The diplomats and statesmen
Who knew too well!
Who knew! . . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

FLATBUSH

In fashionable Flatbush one May afternoon
I saw the orchids blooming in the sun;
While Beauty led me till the day was done,
And from the sea arose a crescent moon.

My soul adored the splendid Flatbush homes,
The lovely bowers and the cool green walks;—
But when I thought of homes where hunger
stalks,
It seemed that child-blood went to build these
domes.

* * * *

One feels accursed because his inner being
Forever weeps at sight of jades and silk;—
And perfumed poodles to the mind's eye bring,
A hungry slum child's weak and meagre milk.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

WHERE TO?

What is this life of endless beginnings,
This constant seeking for something afar;
Where is the madman who doth conceive it,
The author of earth's eternal scar?

Bides he aloft in his cozy heaven,
Smiling, sarcastic, at mortal woe,
Or is he aware of this dwarf existence,
The harrowing struggles here below?

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

DANIEL DE LEON

IN MEMORIAM

And art thou dead, oh great soul. brave and true,
Thou who didst scorn the privileged and the
strong,

Or hast thou gone, as goes the minstrel's song,
Into the realm where skies are always blue?

I can not think of thee as one who died,
For everywhere thy works loom large and
bright;

I can not think that the eternal night
Hath gulped thy being's kindliness and pride.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THEY WHO WEEP

They who weep in the night, my love,
Oh, those who weep in the night;—
The lonely lives and the weary ones
Who wage their bitter fight!

Would God hath given me power to heal,
Ay, power to cheer sad souls;
To teach them love of a great ideal
And point them to their goals.

KINDRED SPIRITS

Though words were not uttered between them,
The gaze in her eyes told it all;—
Orbs that were deep as the ocean,
Betraying her inner devotion,
Her spirit in sacred emotion,
His own soul's kinship did call.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

NATURE

It needs no word to sound its loveliness,
It is not longing to be heard or sung;
The springs and summers leave it unafraid,
It heeds not man's lament nor worldly wrong.

VIGIL

Last night I sat beside thee, oh, my own,
And saw thy frail young form in slumber lost;
While thy fair bosom heaved in restless tone,
Like some sad bark by stormy billow tossed.

Thy face contained a look of weariness,
A curse was written in its every line;
It made one conscious of the bitterness
Love holds within her sweet and sacred wine.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

OCTOBER IDYLL

When the sun shines and a south breeze blows
And the heavens are blue,
There comes a peace; the kind that only a poet
knows.

Something within the heart chants a melody,
It sings of reconciliation to earth,
And one grows glad of life. . . .

It is enough to know, that there are days like these
When wounded hearts are healed;—
Enough to feel the caress of the breeze.

Two yellow butterflies and two snow white
Are hovering over the meadow;
And this in late October.

When the green is slowly dying, and crickets are
asleep,
These ethereal vagabonds are still in love with
life,
Not heeding Winter's footsteps.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

Beauty comes on nimble feet,
Treading lightly on the fields;
She twangs her eternal melodies into one's soul.

Once in October, long ago,
Beside a bonfire bright,
When stars were singing in the sky
Sweet rhapsodies of night,
We sat upon a tuft of grass
And gazed into the fire,
And inwardly we conjured up
Great castles of desire. . .

And now we are old,
Not in years but in dreams;—
Withering slowly each day.
Like to a rose in October garden;
Stifled in morass of material things;—
And dumb as the vaults of man are dumb
Beside fair Beauty's soul. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

WE HAVE NOT FAILED

We have not failed, we have not failed, oh
brothers,
Tho' dim as night and cold the world appears;
We have not flinched, we have not feared the
struggle,
And victory is ours with the years.

And though the fools may jeer us in derision,
And plutocrats display their bitter wrath,
We shall not leave the sacred task unfinished,
Nor fail to point mankind the sunward path.

We have not failed, we have not failed, oh
brothers,
Tho' dim as night and cold the world appears;
We shall not flinch, we shall not fear the struggle,
'Till victory is ours with the years.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

SOUL OF A SHOPKEEPER

What shall repay the inner woe,
The deep depression of one's soul?
Who shall the spirit's anguish know
Of him who finds no goal?

The shekels come, the credits rise,
The coffers bulge with earthly goods;
These in exchange for summer skies
And God's green woods. . .

Oh, grant me respite, Mother Earth,
From endless days in busy mart;
To live and rest and know the worth
Of quiet mind and peace of heart. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

“OPEN FOR DAILY MEDITATION”

They come on the wings of desire
To silence their innermost pain—
Haggard and heartsore and bleeding
Victims of barter and gain. . .

They kneel in the dusk of the chapel
To ease their careworn souls—
Away from the city's mire
Where all play pitiful roles. . .

They come to shed their burdens
Before a kindly God—
And, leaving the silent altars,
Go back to toil and plod. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE IRISH MARTYRS

(Written after the Easter Uprising.)

Thy are not dead
Who rose to smite a king,
Who dared oppose
The rule of duke and lord;—
The valiant band
Who gave their all for love,
That Freedom's name
Might be a living word.

Thy are not dead
Who split their noble blood,
To free a people
From oppression's thumb;
For Tyrants only ever really die
And only cowards stay docile and dumb. . .

Their voices will resound
Across the years to come
And rouse the youth
Of Erin's Emerald Isle;

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

To break the yoke
That England's cruel hand
Had forged about
Their hapless nation's throat. . .

They are not dead;—
These noble Irish sons;
Their names must live
As long as Liberty. . .

.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

SILENCE

Silence reigns on the hill
And the heart is at rest;
Nature adorned in her glory,
Sweet and divinely dressed,
Lulls the heart's hunger
And stills the throbbing pain:
Lingering cloudlets remain
While the sky in the west
Is adorned in a red-golden robe again.

Now it were well to lie down
And forever remain,
Thoughtless and wordless
A being unmoved:—
Now it were well to forget
The days one had suffered and loved;
It were joy to renounce mortal form
And enter into the silence
One ever hungers after,
In life's eternal storm. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

IN MEMORY OF HORACE TRAUBEL

Like to a fallen leaf
Thy mortal form hath dropped,
Wearied of Summer splendor
And the year's last breath.
Firm in the faith of immortality
And brimming over with the love of life
Thou smilest even now
Upon the sleep called "Death."
For thee, oh Horace Traubel
There is no end of all. . .

* * * *

Love cradled you within her tender lap;
And all thy days were but a stepping stone,
From Love's one planet to the Cosmic Whole. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

MODERN LOVE

It turns to hate, because its spirit yearneth
To enslave, to hinder and to bind:—
'Tis not content to dominate the body,
But ever striveth to possess the mind.

And until man may see the dawn of freedom
And not until the present passes by;—
Love must forever be a tyrant,
Not merely that, but must remain a lie. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

SUNSET

The sea descends to silent night,
The skies are crimson in the west;
While from the east a lonely light
Guides the homeward ships to rest.

The sandy beach lies blushing gold
And gentle wavelets kiss the shore;
And myriad souls their wings unfold,
The sweet night to adore. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE MARCH WIND

Yes, I have seen the sunset wielding a brush,
Dipped in the purest dye of purple and gold;
And tinting the snow clad meadows on March
afternoons,
In wonderful patterns that flashed through the
eye to one's soul.

And I've listened at night to the March wind's
echoing sobs
Bemoaning the price that we pay for our
journeying on. . .
Or lulling the sleepless ones slowly to slumber and
rest;
Effacing their daily burdens of sorrow and strife.

Then the gnawing and yearning and hunger came
on me again
And bade me go forth with the muses to wander
once more;—
To chant as of old to an age of unlistening ears
And twang on my lyre the March wind's echoing
sob. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

SPRING SONG

(IN WARTIME)

'Tis Spring and the earth is reborn with joy,
The skies are alive and smile;
While shadows of sorrow enshroud my soul
And torture me all the while.

My heart goes weeping over the hills
For those who went away
To die in far off battlefields
Beyond the oceans grey.

And I cannot banish from my mind
One fair unfinished thing
That lies beneath the greening earth
And ne'er shall see the Spring. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

JOHN REED

(IN MEMORIAM)

Spirit of youth that flingest far thy banners,
To bind a bleeding world into one;—
Scion of races of pioneer pilgrims
Who dared to seek new freedom in the sun. . .

Thine was the love that hath no earthly ending,
Starlike and faithful even unto death;
Ever the oppressed and downtrodden
defending,—
Shouting human brotherhood with life's last
breath. . .

Kin to the lightning that pierces the heavens
When earth lies enshrouded in storm and in
stress;
Thine was the spirit that hell could not conquer,—
It liveth forever to love and to bless. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

IN WARTIME

Ay, verily has it come to pass
That one must silence e'en his soul;
Lest one speak as Christ hath spake
And play the martyr's role. . .

Methinks that e'en the Decalogue,
Should now be carefully revised;
To fit the spirit of the day;—
The world uncivilized. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

FIRST LOVE

Serene as the summer night her fancies fly
Over the city roofs to the great West;
There in a flowery lane by moonbeams kissed,
Her weary soul seeks rest.

Memories linger still within her heart
And mock her spirit like some wingless dove;
They seem to doubt that one so buffeted,
Should e'er have known first love.

First love! The very thought is maddening,
When but the ashes on the hearth remain;—
And in the silences no echo falls,
To ease the yearning and the inner pain. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

NIGHT IN CHICAGO

The wind blows out of the lake tonight
And weeps in the treetops tall;
In tones that smart the lonely heart
As I list to the raindrops fall.

And the song that the air contains tonight
Is one of eternal woe;—
For those who roam and have no home
When wintry tempests blow. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

AWAITING A CHILD

(November 19th, 1914.)

God grant me this one wish,
The fire of my soul;
Ease my loved one's pain
Lord help her reach the goal.

And lead the new-born soul aright
In all its wandering on earth;
That it may add to human light,
That it may be of real worth.

Oh may it be a soul of love
To ease the world's pain and woe;
And may thy guidance from above
Teach it how to live and grow. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

THE MEADOWLARK AND THE POET

(Translated from the Yiddish of B. Kovner.)

The sky is blue, a potter's field,—
A green and blooming tree,
And by its side a silent grave,
Wherein there rests a dream.

A mother's dream, her only son,
How deep her grief doth smart,
The earth had gulped her only child
Together with her heart. . .

A poet was her only son,
Whose soul the whole day long,
Did burn and bloom eternally
And gave itself to song.

A freedom song, a song of strife,
A song that called for joy;—
That sowed a myriad ray of hope
In heart of man and boy.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

The poet dead, yet one still hears
His sweet enchanting lyre;—
'Tis caried by a meadowlark
Who sings and does not tire. . .

The meadowlark swings upon the bough,
That overhangs the tomb;
And sings the poet's plaintive notes
And dreams the poet's dream. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

BOY AND MAN

One was a youth with eyes turned heavenward
And one a man who drank the bitter lees;
Life smiled upon the boy and urged him on,
The man with head bowed low, crawled on his
knees.

Each day the twain were toiling on their upward
path
'Gainst rain and storm and thorny hedges cruel;
The youth walked firmly to attain his goal,
The man with Fate had fought his bitter duel.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

AUTUMN

AT THE SEASHORE

“The end of summer, alas!
All fair things must fade:”
Sing the waves a dirge
Upon the vacant beach.

The bungalows dark and still
Are perched upon the hill;—
Where is the joy and laughter
Of a day ago? . . .

The wind is howling
In the chimney tops
Of the deserted cottages;
Proclaiming the winter's approach.

And ice-born sirens and fawns
Gather upon the beach
And frolic joyously
Beneath the Autumn clouds.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

TREAD OF THE FROST

The frost came slowly stealing o'er the hill,
Like hungry tiger seeking food in vain;
It brought unbounded agony and pain
To flower and bud which it would slowly kill.

Next morn the sun rose on a barren waste
And brought the teardrops to nasturtium
cheeks;

Then came the snowdrifts and the weary weeks
And Boreas through the woodland came in haste.

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

LYRIC

It is not I, it is not I
Who ever doth aspire;
To things beyond the human reach,
In madness of desire.

Mine be a life of toil and love
And joy in earthly things;
Fair mother Earth sufficeth me.
Let angels have their wings. . .

May sear-eyed mortals strive in vain
To reach some heavenly sphere;
I need not seek for Godliness,—
I find it all right here. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

“A WIND-TOSSED ROSE-LEAF”—*Hafiz*

Fluttering in the wind,
A rose-leaf passed me by;
I caught a glimpse of it
Through my restless eye.

Rose-leaf hast a fate
Sure as day, thought I,
To live eternally,
To live and never die. . .

SPIRIT OF THE STORM

MY ESTATE

The homeless man halted my progress
As I was surveying the town,
“Give me the price of a bed,”
He stammeringly said.
I dug into my pockets
And found a lyric poem;—
But I dared not offer it. . .

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